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WEEKLY VIETNAM INDICATORS

Week Ending 15 May 1971

NSA Declassification/Release Instructions on File.

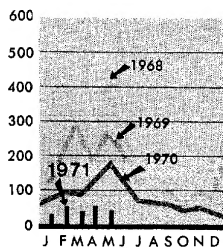
For the President Only

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SOUTH VIETNAM WEEKLY INDICATORS

1968-1971

Weekly average for each month

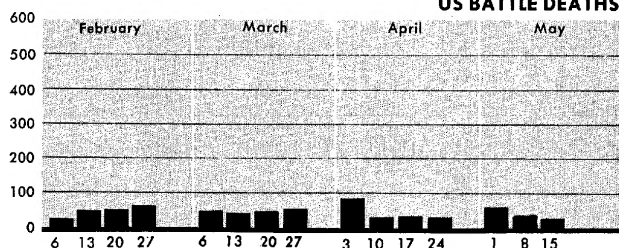


FEBRUARY 1971 - MAY 1971

Weekly data as reported

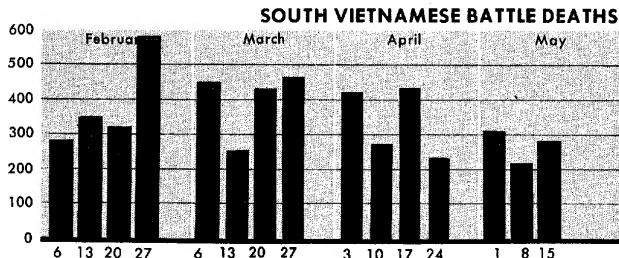
US BATTLE DEATHS

continued to decrease, dropping from last week's 34 to 24.



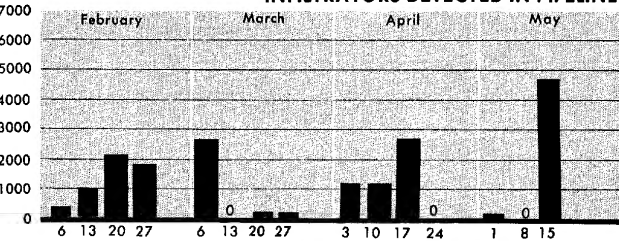
SOUTH VIETNAMESE BATTLE DEATHS

rose to 278 from the 221 of last week. The official total will change as late reports are received and will be lower than the figures released to the press by the GVN.



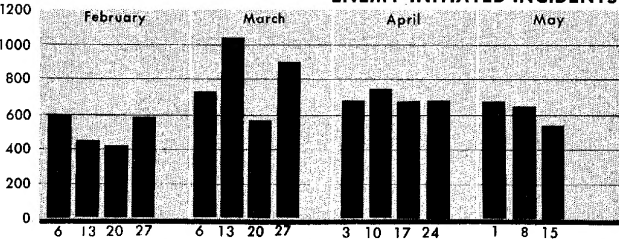
INFILTRATORS DETECTED IN PIPELINE

stand at 6 battalion size, 3 "gap fill" and 16 special purpose groups for a total of some 4,600 personnel. This brings the estimate of infiltrators since 1 October 1970 to 64,200 - 66,200.



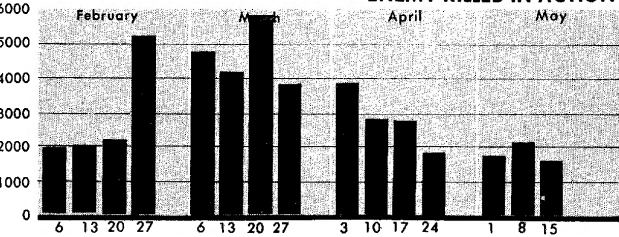
ENEMY-INITIATED INCIDENTS

declined from the 621 of last week to 526.



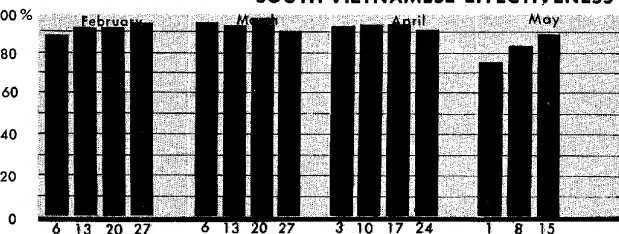
ENEMY KILLED IN ACTION

dropped from last week's 2028 to 1400, the lowest total since the end of January.



SOUTH VIETNAMESE EFFECTIVENESS

as measured by the percentage of enemy killed by GVN forces rose from last week's 83% to 88%.



Statistics for the latest week shown are preliminary

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Enemy Activity

In South Vietnam, there were two sharp clashes with enemy forces on 12-13 May. The first of these took place on the eastern edge of the A Shau Valley in Thua Thien Province (Operation LAM SON 720) and resulted in 200 enemy killed. The second, on the same date, occurred in Kien Giang Province, Military Region 4, and cost the enemy 82 killed. Apart from these two engagements, enemy-initiated activity was at very low levels, and there are few indications suggesting that any significant change is imminent.

During the week in Cambodia, military activity was generally at a low level. On 15 May, some 2,000 ARVN troops initiated a new search and clear operation 18 miles southeast of Svay Rieng in the Parrots Beak area. So far only light contact has been made. In the northwest, government units committed to retaking Chong Kal in Oddar Meanchey Province are approaching the town from the southwest and coordinating their final moves.

Communist forces in south Laos launched heavy offensive activity on 16-17 May in the Bolovens Plateau, which resulted in the loss of almost all major friendly positions there and the town of Paksong as well. Control of the Bolovens will give the Communists a greater degree of security in the infiltration and supply corridor further to the east, and will put them in a position to make a thrust to the west toward Pakse and the Mekong River. There are, however, no concrete indications of future enemy intentions in this region. Elsewhere in the Panhandle, in Military Region (MR) III, Dong Hene -- the easternmost friendly-held town -- reportedly fell on 17 May with government forces withdrawing to the north of the town. On the Long Tieng front in MR II, fighting continued southwest of the Plain of Jars, where government irregulars made some progress. Northeast of Luang Prabang in MR I, government forces also continued to expand their defensive perimeter around the city in spite of enemy counterattacks by fire.

Enemy Infiltration

The recent lull in detection of personnel infiltration activity ended this week with six regular and 16 small, specially designated groups noted in Laos. These groups, together with the three "gap-fills" they create, total about 4,600 men and raise the estimate of personnel moving to South Vietnam/Cambodia since 1 October 1970 to some 64,200-66,200. Additionally, a gap in the sequential numbering of one of the infiltration series suggests that seven groups totaling another 3,000 to 4,000 personnel may be in the system. Further evidence will be required to determine the status of these possible "gap groups."

South Vietnam Developments

The domestic political scene remains quiet in South Vietnam, with most activity centering on preparations for the presidential elections. President Thieu is taking steps to mobilize the government bureaucracy in support of his re-election campaign by holding a series of private meetings with military commanders, province chiefs, and city mayors to enlist their support. These officials in turn are mobilizing local council members on Thieu's behalf. Thieu, [REDACTED] expressed exasperation at Vice President Ky's use of his office to attack the government, is also attempting to curtail Ky's activities by instructing members of the cabinet not to invite Ky to any government sponsored public functions and ordering province chiefs not to provide him the facilities normally given to a vice president. [REDACTED] the government may try, by buying votes if necessary, to have the Lower House restore the Senate-eliminated provision of the election bill which would restrict the number of presidential candidates. [REDACTED]

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Communist Developments

The statement issued by Hanoi's Vietnam News Agency (VNA), in which the DRV agreed to accept the return of a large group of its own prisoners of war, does not by itself signal any substantive movement forward by Hanoi on the prisoner question. The statement is characteristic of ones issued on similar occasions in the past and, indeed, the level of Hanoi's response -- via a VNA statement -- is no different from past practice.

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